

# Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications: Message of Congratulations



**TAKEDA Ryota**

Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ) on the 50th anniversary of its founding. Against the background of this 50-year milestone, I have heard that the recipients of these prestigious awards have made remarkable contributions to the development of information-communications and broadcasting throughout the world through activities of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all award recipients for their efforts.

Founded in September 1, 1971, the role of ITU-AJ over the last 50 years has been to connect Japan and the world through diverse activities in the ITU, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), and other organizations in the fields of telecommunications and broadcasting.

Looking back over this 50-year period, Japan has faced a variety of severe economic and social upheavals such as the 1973 oil crisis (“oil shock”), appreciation of the yen following the Plaza Accord, collapse of the bubble economy, Asian currency crisis, 2008 financial crisis (“Lehman shock”), and the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. On the other hand, new services and businesses in a wide range of fields have appeared and expanded during this time while social mechanisms and people’s attitudes and behavioral patterns have undergone great changes. One of the main reasons for these changes is the evolution of information and communications technology (ICT) centered about the Internet and mobile phones.

The members of ITU-AJ have been key leaders of industry providing vital social infrastructures and facilities related to communications and broadcasting as well as services for a wide array of industries. In this capacity, they have developed energetic business activities and made major contributions to social and industrial infrastructures and facilities while responding in a flexible manner to changing times.

Today, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to prevail in Japan and throughout the world, ICT has come to be recognized more than ever as a technology essential to human existence and economic activities. Even regions in which digitalization has not been progressing well are now experiencing a wave of

digitalization. Moreover, it has been pointed out that making maximum use of digitalization and remote computing can bring about change at the individual, industrial, and social levels and lead to the creation of new value. Global needs with respect to digitalization will only increase in the years to come. For example, Japan has been providing 5G commercial services since March of last year and the number of contracts for 5G services has been increasing dramatically in many countries throughout the world. The global market for 5G services is expected to exceed 70 trillion yen by 2025 and 150 trillion yen by 2030.

With the aim of contributing to digital transformation on a global scale, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) will pursue the overseas development of 5G and infrastructure systems such as optical submarine cables. We also seek to promote a common recognition on an international level with respect to the use of AI and the distribution of data. Furthermore, to improve our industrial competitiveness in anticipation of a post-pandemic world, we will promote the development of technologies “Beyond 5G” by bringing together the expertise of both the public and private sectors. We will also support the strategic acquisition of intellectual property and the international standardization of research and development achievements. Through these efforts, we will support the members of ITU-AJ in the challenges they face in the global marketplace and in their activities on international stages such as the ITU.

Against this background, the members of ITU-AJ are expected to be active in a broad range of areas, to create new value, and to bring about business reform while incorporating new technologies and knowledge. I look forward to your further efforts in achieving these goals under the leadership of ITU-AJ.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere respect for the achievements made by the recipients of these awards in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of ITU-AJ. Furthermore, to all members supporting ITU-AJ and its activities, I offer words of congratulations and look forward with great anticipation to further developments in Japan’s information-communications industry. I extend my sincere congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the founding of ITU-AJ.